



## HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE DUNCAN HUNTER – CHAIRMAN

### *PRESS RELEASE*

---

For Immediate Release:  
June 29, 2005

Contact: Josh Holly (202) 225-2539

## CHAIRMAN HUNTER OPENING STATEMENT

### *Full Committee Hearing on Detainee Operations at Guantanamo Bay*

Washington, D.C. – This past weekend I had the opportunity to lead a bipartisan delegation of 16 Members of this body (including 6 Republicans and 5 Democrats from this committee) to Guantanamo to examine firsthand the treatment of detainees there. What we saw was not the “gulag of our times.” Instead, we saw a world-class detention facility where detainees representing a threat to our national security are well fed, given access to top-notch medical facilities and provided an opportunity to obtain legal representation.

While there our delegation ate from the same menu as the detainees, including a lunch of chicken breast in orange sauce, rice, okra and bread. After eating it myself, I’d argue that the food is better than what our own soldiers eat in the field. In fact, the average detainee at Guantanamo has gained over five pounds.

Not only are detainees being well fed, they’re receiving first-rate medical services comparable to HMOs in the United States. The average detainee visits Guantanamo’s modern hospital facilities four times each month. In comparison, the average American male only visits the doctor 3.7 times each year.

Detainees also receive rights that American service men and women captured in battle would not receive. 100 percent of the detainees have been given written notice of their right to contest their detention in a United States court of law, as well as instructions on how to obtain a lawyer pro bono.

Our courts have required detainees be given “notice and opportunity to be heard.” In fact, a detainee is heard numerous times, including:

1. A battlefield determination
2. A field hearing
3. A Combatant Status Review Tribunal (CSRT); and
4. A hearing, at least annually, before an Administrative Review Board (ARB).

These reviews ensure that detainees at Guantanamo weren't simply "caught up in the fight" but are a continuing threat to our national security. The United States has detained over 70,000 individuals in the Global War on Terror. Of that number, only 500 of the most dangerous are still detained.

We must keep in mind that these detainees are deadly and include the alleged 20<sup>th</sup> hijacker (Mohammed al-Qahtani) as well as a number of Osama Bin Laden's personal bodyguards and others who had a direct role in the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks.

We are in a new war with an enemy who attacks our civilians and does not wear uniforms. Therefore, we have to fight this war with new tactics. Since the enemy attacks our civilians without provocation and warning, one of the consequences for those who attack us may be prolonged detention. Not to punish them but to protect our families.

Guantanamo will be kept open. The facility is keeping known terrorists off the battlefield while providing us with valuable intelligence. The leadership at the facility emphasizes religious and cultural respect and provides treatment of detainees that goes far beyond that required by the Geneva Convention.

Gentlemen, we are pleased you are here today and we look forward to your testimony. We appreciate what you're doing for our country.

###

<http://armedservices.house.gov/>